

may you break your neck before you get out of the town." Luther complained to the elector, and the elector banished Carlstadt from his dominions. This harsh proceeding only widened the popularity of the exiled ex-doctor of theology, who wandered to Rotenburg, to Strasburg, to Basle, preaching against " the new papal sophist," " the friend of Antichrist/' and appealing directly to the Christian conscience of the common man. The common man naturally took his side in the quarrel, and began here and there to preach himself in Carlstadt's spirit, and to mingle with his inspirations very practical denunciations of the abuses that vexed the peasant's soul.

Carlstadt was outdone by Thomas Miinzer, one of the fugitives of Zwickau, who, after roaming about Bohemia nursing his fanatic spirit with Taborite reminiscences, had planted himself in Saxon Alstedt as the direct representative of the Holy Spirit. In this capacity he preached not only against Antichrist, but against Luther as a false prophet. For Miinzer the main thing is direct communion with God, not through the Bible but through the Holy Ghost, who speaks to the human soul by dreams and visions and signs. " Man received the revelation of God, not through the Church, not by proclamation of the divine word, still less through the dead letter of the Bible, but only through the Spirit of God, who speaks directly to him." This is the true gospel which Miinzer has been inspired to proclaim. Dreams and visions apart, the principle of these revelations seems sane enough— more rational, in fact, than that either of the believers in the artificial authority of the pope and the Church, or in the sole authority of the Bible. If God reveals Himself directly to man at all, why suppose that He only chooses to do so through certain Hebrew prophets and evangelists, or through pope and General Council? As if every noble inspiration of the mind and heart of man were not a revelation of the divine! Miinzer's contention had both more reason and more religion in it than the champions of a merely artificial revelation, whether Papist or Protestant, were able to perceive. But such subjective revelations require to be severely tested by reason and con-• science, and in those of Miinzer there was much that outraged both reason and conscience. They were, in fact, but the ravings